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VuFind - Look & Feel Guerilla Test

Conte, Marisa; Strickland, Beth

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Usability Report Cover Sheet

Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall Project: VuFind• Project Title: Look & Feel Guerilla Test
Committee & Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Usability Group: Suzanne Chapman (chair), Shevon Desai, Kat Hagedorn, Julie Piacentine, Ken Varnum• Usability Task Force: Shevon Desai (co-convener), Kat Hagedorn (co-convener), Ken Varnum (stakeholder), Scott Ash (stakeholder), Marisa L. Conte, David Fulmer, Beth Strickland
Report Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report Author(s): Marisa Conte and Beth Strickland• Contact Information: ul-usability@umich.edu• Report Date: November 2008
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Usability Report

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Summary: Goals, Methodology and Test Design

VuFind is an open-source next generation discovery tool that will soon be used to provide users access to the MLibrary catalog. VuFind is not currently slated to replace Mirlyn as the main library catalog, but it will work in conjunction with Mirlyn.

Goals for Guerilla Test*

- Determine how users perceive the catalog when it is and is not embedded into a page with navigation tool bars located at the top of the library's homepage.
- Determine how and why users would search for items using the tools located on the embedded catalog page, as well as how and why users would search for items using the tools located on the non-embedded catalog page.
- Determine if users are more or less likely to use a single-line search box if located in the middle of the screen vs. a search box located at the top of the screen.

Methodology for Guerilla Test

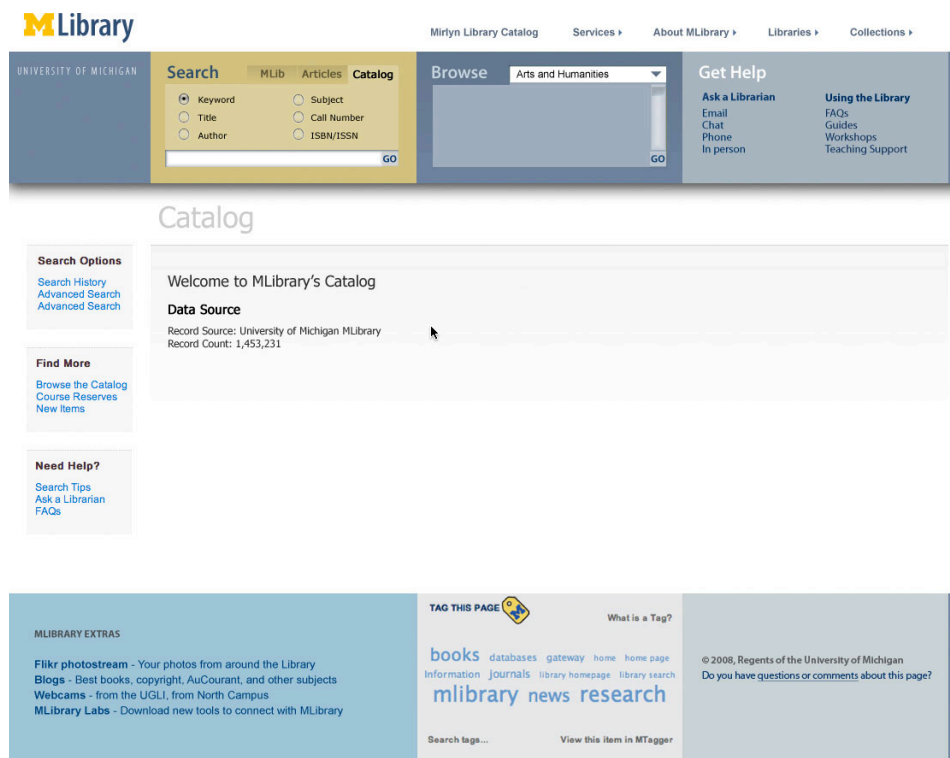
- Two task force members (Marisa Conte and Beth Strickland) approached users in various public areas to ask for their participation in this guerilla test.
- Users were approached in these areas: public computers located on the 2nd floor of the Graduate Library, Faculty Exploratory in the Graduate Library, main study area on the 1st floor of the Undergraduate Library, the Tech Deck in UGLi, various floors in the Taubman Medical Library, and areas of the Public Health Building.
- Average test time was between 5-7 minutes.
- Users were offered candy as a small incentive.

* This report describes a usability assessment performed by the MLibrary Usability Group and Task Force. Usability assessment is a part of the iterative design process used to develop new systems and services at MLibrary. This report describes one test in a series of tests performed at one point in the iterative design process. Sample sizes are small and findings serve only as clues to help guide decisions. Implementation of any recommendations should take these limitations into account.

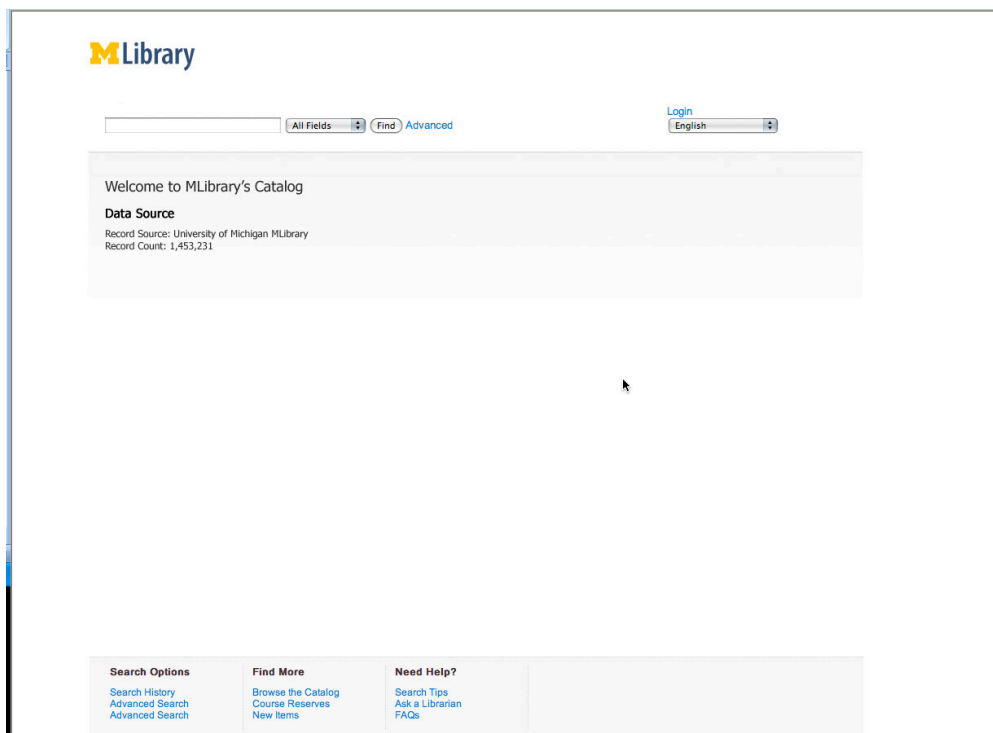
Test Design

- Each participant was asked to identify which design they preferred, either screenshot A (below) with the embedded catalog, or screenshot B (below) without the embedded catalog.
- Participants were asked to explain why they liked either A or B.
- Each user was asked to identify where they go on the page, on both A and B, to find a book.
- Each user was asked to identify what else they could do on both page A and page B. (e.g. browse categories, ask a librarian for help, do an advanced search, etc.)
- After looking more closely at each page, users were asked to identify if (and why) their original preference for which page they liked best (A or B) had changed.
- Participants were shown screenshot C (below) and were asked “what do you expect to be able to do from this page?”
- Users who did identify “searching” as an option were asked where they would go on the page to begin a search.
- Once users identified whether or not they would start a search using the textbox in the middle of the page, or start their search using the search box located at the top of the page, they were asked to explain why they didn’t use the search option already identified.
- See Appendix A for test script.

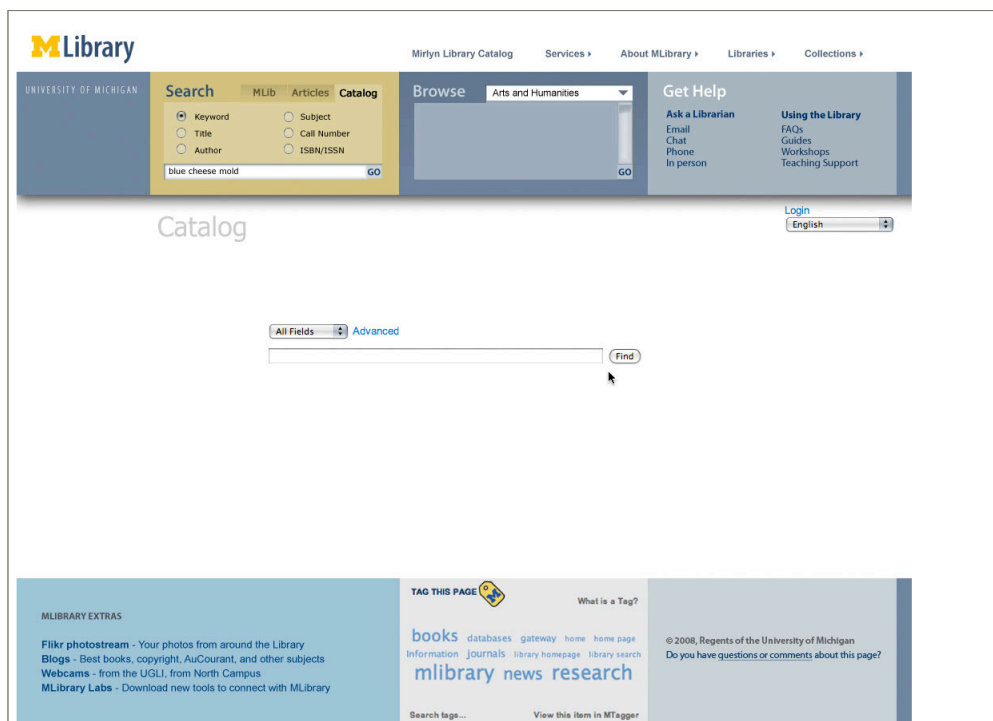
Screenshot A: Embedded Catalog



Screenshot B: Non-Embedded Catalog



Screenshot C: Embedded Catalog (Search Page)



Test Results

Total Participants: 15

6 undergraduate students
5 graduate students
3 staff
1 visitor

Q1 - Preference for embedded or stand-alone catalog

All participants (n=15) expressed a strong preference for the embedded catalog (A), based on both visual appeal and perceived functionality. Testers commented frequently on the use of color and boxes to separate different areas of the page on version A.

Selected comments about embedded catalog (A)

- "[A] has more things to use. It's more user-friendly and more aesthetically pleasing."
- "It's easy to find what you're looking for real quick."
- "Things pop out more to me. Get help is right there."

Selected comments about stand-alone catalog (B)

- "[B] is just basically a Google search to me. I guess there are a few other things I could do."
- "[B] doesn't have a lot of information up front. I don't know what to do with the search box. Search what - the title of a book?"
- "[B] is bland, not exciting."

Q2 - Demonstrate how to perform a search

Embedded catalog (A)

All testers quickly identified the gold search box as the point on the page to perform a search. Some testers commented on the ability to search by author or title.

Stand-alone catalog (B)

All testers identified the search box as the point on the page to perform a search. Some testers were uncertain about the data source and what they would actually be searching. Several indicated that they would use the dropdown menu next to the search box to select title or author.

Q3 - What else can I do from this page?

Testers were more likely to identify features on the embedded catalog page than on the stand-alone page. Four testers initially thought that the stand-alone page was only for searching, then noticed Help and other features at the bottom of the page. Fourteen testers identified help or ask-a-librarian features on the embedded catalog page. Overall user perception was that there was less functionality on the stand-alone page.

Selected comments about embedded catalog (A)

- "There's a lot of stuff, so I really like this."
- "It just looks like a lot more resources."

Selected comments about stand-alone catalog (B)

- "I guess [B] has the same features down here ... it's very confusing. I don't know what to do with this much [white space]."
- "It looks like advanced search or ... I don't know. I don't know if you could do a whole lot more."
- "It looks to have almost the same stuff, but it doesn't spring out."

Q4 - Has your preference changed?

All testers retained a strong preference for the embedded catalog after looking at both pages.

Q5 - What do you expect to be able to do from this (embedded catalog search) page?

All testers identified search as a main function of the page.

When asked where they would begin a search, 9 testers indicated the center search box, and 6 indicated the gold search box. There did not seem to be a strong preference for the center search box over the gold search box, as several testers who selected the center box were uncertain about what it would do and selected it because they saw it first. Several testers were confused by having two search options on the page.

Of the 6 testers indicating the gold search box:

- 1 user couldn't see the center box
- 2 users preferred the gold search box due to lack of labeling on the center search box and ambiguity about the data source
 - "I don't know if I could take [the center box] seriously, I don't know what it's connected to."
- 3 users commented on the different options for search (title, author, keyword)
 - "This has all the options and you can choose right there."

Of the 10 testers indicating the center search box:

- 6 mentioned that the search box is the focus of the page, or that their eyes are drawn to the center of a page
 - "It seems like it's the center, it invites you to look, it's the focus."
- 2 indicated that while they would use the center box, they were confused and didn't know which box to select
 - "I'd be confused and not know what field I was looking for initially."
- 2 preferred the center box as they felt they would have to know exactly what they were looking for to use the gold box

- "This gives you the option to search all fields, where [in the gold box], you have to know the title or author."

Recommendations

1. Implement the catalog embedded in the library template rather than as a stand-alone page.
2. Provide clearer searching options to be associated with a center search box if it is going to be retained in the final design.
3. Determine if there's a need to make one search option (gold search box vs. center search box) stand out more to users than the other.
4. Keep the different colored boxes at the top of the page to clearly separate the different functions of the site.

Appendices

Appendix A: Look and Feel Test Script

Greet the participant

Hi, my name is _____. Would you be willing to participate in a brief study about one of the library's services? It will take about five to ten minutes of your time. (Y/N)

Pre-test procedure

Thanks for participating in this study. Before we begin:

- I want to emphasize that this is a test of a library product, not of you, or your abilities. We're asking these questions to learn about the product based on your experience.
- Your answers will be anonymous.
- I need you to sign an IRB consent form, which is for our records.
- You're not obligated to participate, even after signing the form.

Thanks! Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Begin test

What is your status?

- Faculty
- Staff
- Graduate Student
- Undergraduate Student
- Visitor

Part I – Testing the look and feel

All users will be shown 2 paper copies of the VuFind gateway page:

- *Embedded in the template for the new library website (example A)*
- *As a standalone page (no design relationship w/ new library website) (example B)*

These pages represent designs for a new website to help you access the library's catalog. Take a few minutes to look at each design.

- Q1: Which design do you prefer?
- Why?

Test each page using the following scenario (for both A and B):

- Q2: Please describe what you would do to find a book using this page (*document user actions*).
- Q3: What else can you do from each page?

After user tests each page, ask:

- Q4: Now that you've looked at each page, do you still prefer the one you chose before, or has your preference changed?
- Why or why not?

Part II – Testing the added searchbox

Show the user a mockup of the embedded VuFind page with added search bars (example C).

- Q5: What do you expect to be able to do from this page?
 - *If "search" is mentioned*
 - Please describe where you would go on the page to perform your search.
 - *If they noted the other search option in Part I: You noted (the unutilized search option) before. Why did you decide not to use it?"*
 - *If they did not note the other search option in Part I: Did you notice (the unutilized search option)? If yes, why did you decide not to use it?*
 - *If "search" is not mentioned*
 - Please point to the areas on this page where you could begin a search for information.
 - Did you notice these areas initially?
 - *If yes: Why did you decide not to use them?*

End test

Thanks for participating in this study. We appreciate your help! Feel free to take some candy.